326 Whereas with us the village inn is the place where the affairs of
521 the week are noisily debated, it is at the smithy where the Mongo
571 Negroes congregate. There the elders gather -- the younger men have no voice here; there the various differences about (or among) wives and the impending taxes are discussed; amidst the billows of smoke -- drawn with deep puffs out of their huge bamboo pipes -- the smith is the only one who works on and earns his living nobly.

326 The smith is the most judicious craftsman among the Mongo
428 Negroes.

His trade is practically the only one which is a family affair and is passed on from father to son. If a smith does not have any children, the business is taken over by his younger brother.

This right of inheritance is by no means general in the other trades; the trade of the smith is inherited while the others are taken up by any Tom, Dick, or Harry who happens to have a liking for them.

325 The smithy where the smith plies his trade is a wide oblong dark
348 hut (about five meters by ten meters) built alongside the public highway. In contrast with the other dwellings of the Negroes, the floors of which are generally built about 20 centimeters above the road, the floor of the smithy is dug out from 30 to 70 centimeters below the level of the road so that one goes down a step from the road into the smithy.

The reason why the floor of the smithy should be dug out in this way is not quite clear to me, but most probably it is to prevent the danger of fire when the storm winds that accompany the heavy tropical rains sweep through the huts. By digging out the floor in this way, an earthen enclosure about half a meter high is formed around the smithy, and this protects the smith from the wind and enables him to continue quietly at work.

325 In spite of the primitiveness of his tools [95] and the primitive manipulation of them, the smith knows how to get what he needs from his implements. The forge (lotulu) is constructed as follows: a block of wood is cut about 60 centimeters long, 40 centimeters wide, and 30 centimeters high, with a hollow pipe, half a meter long, connected to it. This is all formed of one piece. With the aid of a banana stalk, on which the clay is moulded, a smith's pipe is formed. The banana stalk is removed from the clay, and the hollow pipe (boongo) remains. Two, sometimes four, bellows (njasa) are placed on the

325 wooden block. These bellows have the openings covered with the dried hide of some wild animal to which piston rods (biongonga) have been attached. The "biongonga" are pushed up and down in quick tempo by two men to make the draft that fans the little charcoal fire.

In front of the "boongo" the smith (botuli) has dug a kind of trench in which the little charcoal fire is laid. In this fire the iron ore, European iron, and copper sticks (njele-mitakos) are smelted.

Botuli atula la lotulo: "The smith forges with the forge."

325 439 In former times when it was not possible for the Mongo to get European iron, iron ore (bikense bia bokili) was dug out of the forest and heated to melting point in the smithy. Impurities which came to the top were skimmed off, and in this manner the Mongo Negro got his iron. Today, now that the Negro can get his iron so easily from the various trading-posts, he prefers to work with European iron. The imported iron makes a better product, and the Negro no longer has to take the trouble of going to look for his ore. Indeed, the Mongo smith would no longer be able to dispose of lances made of native iron ore because the imported iron is so much better.

325 The implements the smith uses are as follows.

1. Boengwa: the small pounding iron.
2. Loaka: the large pounding iron.
3. Etulaka: the sledgehammer.
4. Eala: the anvil.
5. Lingwata: a hammer which is very much like a European hammer and serves the same purpose.
6. Kongwa: a split stick used to get the hot iron out of the fire and to hold it tightly during the forging.

An iron [96] ring or a piece of liana is placed around the split stick and pushed down to hold the hot object as tightly as possible while it is being forged.

7. Loseno: chisel.
8. Losio: small chisel fastened on a stick, with which the decorations on knives, lances, and rings are carved.
9. Jyoka: the implement chest, a nicely finished box with a lid and a European lock.

000 The objects of iron made by the Mongo smith are as follows.